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House of Representatives

The House met at noon and was called to order by the Speaker pro tempore (Mr. HOLDING).

DESIGNATION OF SPEAKER PRO TEMPORE

The SPEAKER pro tempore laid before the House the following communication from the Speaker:

WASHINGTON, DC,
October 14, 2013.

I hereby appoint the Honorable GEORGE HOLDING to act as Speaker pro tempore on this day.

JOHN A. BOEHNER,
Speaker of the House of Representatives.

MORNING-HOUR DEBATE

The SPEAKER pro tempore. Pursuant to the order of the House of January 3, 2013, the Chair will now recognize Members from lists submitted by the majority and minority leaders for morning-hour debate.

The Chair will alternate recognition between the parties, with each party limited to 1 hour and each Member other than the majority and minority leaders and the minority whip limited to 5 minutes each, but in no event shall debate continue beyond 1:50 p.m.

OUR SACRED DUTY IS TO GOVERN

The SPEAKER pro tempore. The Chair recognizes the gentleman from Virginia (Mr. WOLF) for 5 minutes.

Mr. WOLF. Mr. Speaker, in Luke 12:48, Jesus said:

From everyone who has been given much, much will be demanded; and from the one who has been entrusted with much, much more will be asked.

The Congress and the President have been entrusted with much, namely, the responsibility to govern this country. The American people rightly expect us, regardless of party affiliation, to come together, especially during times of

crisis, and find ways to get things done. They are understandably fed up with the current dysfunction, and I am, too.

Each side thinks it's winning, but, in reality, the country and the American people are losing. Senate Chaplain Barry Black says there is a level of insanity involved in the current government shutdown. Asked what it would take to end the current impasse, the former Navy chaplain said, "It's going to take humility." Wise words. Proverbs 16:18 says:

Pride goes before destruction, a haughty spirit before a fall.

There is too much pride poisoning this debate. The American people should be the winner, not one party or the other, not the administration or the Congress. Shortsighted political victories aimed at capturing the latest headline in a 24-hour news cycle will not stand the test of time, nor will they be viewed well through the lens of history, especially if, on our watch, the trust that must exist between elected officials and the electorate is frayed beyond repair.

For those of us who think ObamaCare is a disaster—and that is a growing number of people in our country—its future will not be decided by the shutting or opening of the government. In fact, the current failings of the system, including the widespread glitches plaguing the Web site, are not getting the news coverage they should because the story has become the shutdown. The public debate surrounding ObamaCare, which will undoubtedly be at the forefront in heading into the midterm elections, will play second fiddle until the government is once again operational.

It also bears mentioning that, while important, ObamaCare must be placed in a larger context of the exploding national debt and deficit and unsustainable spending and entitlement programs set against the back-

drop of a public discourse bereft of civility. Only through enacting reforms based on the bipartisan Simpson-Bowles recommendations will we ever solve the drivers of our deficits. We have put these tough but important reforms off for far too long.

To my colleagues in the Congress and to President Obama who think they are "winning" at this particular moment, we would do well to remember the words of Napoleon Bonaparte in speaking of the changing nature of public opinion. Napoleon said:

The crowd which follows me with adulation would run with the same eagerness were I marching to the guillotine.

I return again to the sentiments of Scripture: We have been given a great trust, and it is demanded of us to come together to solve these problems. It is time to show some humility. It is time to govern. Let's get the government back open, ensure we don't default on our debt, and then commit ourselves to curbing unsustainable entitlement spending.

DAY NUMBER 14 OF THE GOVERNMENT SHUTDOWN

The SPEAKER pro tempore. The Chair recognizes the gentleman from California (Mr. BERA) for 5 minutes.

Mr. BERA of California. Mr. Speaker, day No. 14.

Mr. Speaker, today is the 14th day of the government shutdown, and we are 1 day closer to defaulting on our debt. Mr. Speaker, we've never not paid our bills as Americans—as Americans, we always pay on time—but we are 1 day closer to a manufactured crisis. We've got to stop this.

Mr. Speaker, now is the time for leadership. Enough with the games, enough with the name-calling, and enough with the finger-pointing. We have to come together as Democrats and Republicans and put the country first.

□ This symbol represents the time of day during the House proceedings, e.g., □ 1407 is 2:07 p.m.

Matter set in this typeface indicates words inserted or appended, rather than spoken, by a Member of the House on the floor.



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Mr. Speaker, you are the Speaker of this House. This House has both Democrats and Republicans, and you need to lead us. It's that time. I will make a quick suggestion. Here is what you can do in three easy steps:

Step No. 1, open the government;

Step No. 2, let us pay our bills; and

Step No. 3, let's negotiate. Let's come together as Democrats and Republicans and negotiate a real budget that starts to address our debt. Let's make sure we don't leave our children and grandchildren a mountain of debt. Let's do what our parents and grandparents always did, which was to leave the country better off for the next generation.

That is what it takes—leadership. Mr. Speaker, now is the time for that leadership. You are the Speaker of this House, and we need you to lead us as Democrats and Republicans. America is watching, and we need to put the people's interests first.

THE DEBT CRISIS

The SPEAKER pro tempore. The Chair recognizes the gentleman from California (Mr. MCCLINTOCK) for 5 minutes.

Mr. MCCLINTOCK. Mr. Speaker, the debt limit exists for a simple reason: to assure that public debt isn't recklessly piled up without Congress periodically acknowledging it and addressing the spending patterns that are causing it. If a debt limit increase is supposed to be automatic, as the President suggests, then there is really no purpose to it.

A new dimension has now appeared in this discussion. Unlike every one of his predecessors, this President has vowed that unless Congress unconditionally raises the debt limit, the United States will default on its sovereign debt.

But a failure to raise the debt limit would not, by itself, cause the Nation to default. The Government Accountability Office has consistently held that the Treasury Secretary has "the authority to choose the order in which to pay obligations of the United States" to protect the Nation's credit. Such authority is inherent in the 1789 act that established the Treasury Department and entrusted it with "the management of the revenue" and the "support of the public credit." The affirmative duty of the Treasury Department to do so is underscored by the 14th Amendment.

Our revenues are more than 10 times our debt payments, so paying the debt first to prevent a sovereign default is well within the financial ability of the Federal Government—and indeed, it is a fiscal imperative.

Now, earlier this year, the House passed H.R. 807, which not only explicitly requires the payment of the national debt in the case of an impasse over the debt limit, but even allows the President to exceed the debt limit, itself, in order to protect the Nation's credit. That measure languishes in the

Senate under the threat of a Presidential veto.

Protecting the sovereign credit by prioritizing payments would mean delaying paying other bills. That is also untenable, unthinkable, and something much to be avoided, but it would not imperil the Nation's sovereign credit. Only the President can do that.

The House leadership met with the President last week and offered to extend the debt limit until November 22 with no strings attached. The President refused. Senate Republicans offered a 6-month extension, but the Senate Democratic leader refused.

What the President threatens to do would be catastrophic and unprecedented. The full faith and credit of the United States is what gives markets the confidence to loan money to the Federal Government. Even a threat of default—exactly the kind the President is now making—could have dire consequences to a Nation that now owes more than its entire economy produces in a year.

So where do we go from here?

Republicans have miscalculated on two key assumptions: first, that the Democrats would negotiate the issues that divide our country—they have not; and second, that Democrats would seek to minimize the suffering caused by the impasse—they have not.

Given the ruthless and vindictive way the shutdown has been handled, I now believe that this President would willfully act to destroy the full faith and credit of the United States unless the Congress acquiesces to all of his demands—at least as long as he sees political advantage in doing so.

If the Republicans acquiesce, the immediate crisis will quickly vanish, credit markets will calm, and public life will return to other matters. But a fundamental element of our Constitution will have been destroyed: the power of the purse will have shifted from the representatives of the people to the Executive. The executive bureaucracies will be freed to churn out ever more outlandish regulations with no effective congressional review or check through the purse. A perilous era will have begun in which the President sets spending levels and vetoes any bill falling short of his demands. Whenever a deadline approaches, one House can simply refuse to negotiate with the other until Congress is faced with a Hobson's choice of a shutdown or a default. The Nation's spending will again dangerously accelerate, the deficit will rapidly widen, and the economic prosperity of the Nation will continue to slowly bleed away.

This impasse may have started as a dispute over a collapsing health program, but it has now taken on the dimensions of a constitutional crisis. Yesterday, in Washington, a group of America's veterans rose up to take a stand against these unconstitutional usurpations. I believe the salvation of our Nation now ultimately depends on the American people joining them.

HONORING 12 MEMBERS OF THE 1ST SQUAD, 2ND PLATOON, HOTEL COMPANY OF THE 26TH MARINE REGIMENT

The SPEAKER pro tempore. The Chair recognizes the gentleman from Texas (Mr. VELA) for 5 minutes.

Mr. VELA. Mr. Speaker, I rise today to honor 12 members of the 1st Squad, 2nd Platoon, Hotel Company of the 26th Marine Regiment. These brave men made an important contribution to the war effort in Vietnam, but their efforts could not be honored at the time without exposing ongoing intelligence operations. Like so many of our Nation's heroes, they have not received the recognition they deserve, and I am here today to share with my colleagues in Congress and our entire Nation the details of an incident that helped change the way the Vietnam war was fought.

On May 29, 1967, at the end of Operation Hickory and the beginning of Operation Prairie IV, the 1st Squad, under Sergeant Thomas Gonzalez, was on a reconnaissance patrol when they recovered a spent Russian SA-2 surface-to-air missile inside the demilitarized zone which divided North and South Vietnam. While Russian involvement in the Vietnam war was widely suspected, discovery of the SA-2 was a major find, and the command and control mechanism of the missile was transported to Washington, D.C., for analysis.

Due to the ongoing cold war and heightened political sensitivities regarding Russian involvement in the war, public disclosure of the incident was withheld.

While the unit was never fully recognized for its accomplishment, the intelligence it collected had a direct impact on combat. Prior to discovery of the missile, U.S. aviators flying B-52 bombers to attack Vietnam struggled as enemy forces became more proficient at targeting and shooting American aircraft. This forced Americans to limit their missions to areas further south; and, as the North Vietnamese Army continued to move their surface-to-air missile launch sites south into the DMZ, B-52 aircraft were forced to fly even further south, limiting the effectiveness of their missions to provide support to troops engaged in ground combat.

As a result of the recovery of the SA-2 missile, B-52 bomber crews had a better understanding of the threat, and they used the intelligence collected by the 1st Squad to alter their tactics. Changing the strategy of the B-52 bomb strikes allowed the aircraft to provide better combat support to marines and other ground troops and ultimately saved countless lives.

Forty-six years later, it is time for our Nation to recognize these American heroes. Today, let us honor these men: Sergeant Thomas Gonzalez, Corporal Gerald D. Eggers, Private First Class Ronald W. Blaine, Private First Class Charles L. Melton, Private First